



A 494th Fighter Squadron F-15E Strike Eagle awaits clearance to take off at Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, in January. The aircraft was

equipped with the new Sniper Advanced Targeting Pod. The flight also marked the first time an F-15E carried a GBU-38 Joint Direct Attack Munition.

F-15E crew uses new targeting pod

ROYAL AIR FORCE LAKENHEATH, England — An F-15E Strike Eagle aircrew from the 494th Fighter Squadron took part in a flight that marked an evolution in weapons technology when it used a Sniper Advanced Targeting Pod on the aircraft Jan. 7.

An F-15E weapons system officer can now independently launch satellite-guided weapons on targets. Previously, such launches required ground support coordinates.

“The pod has been a long time coming,” said Capt. **Sean Lowe**, the weapons system officer who tested the pod during the flight. “It enhances the WSO’s skills and the Strike Eagle’s capabilities.”

The sniper pod also enhances the F-15E’s capability by decreasing the time it takes to hit a target after identification, said Col. **Kent**

Laughbaum, 48th Operations Group commander. The sniper pod receives target coordinates directly from a satellite and communicates the information to the munition.

During the flight, Captain Lowe and Capt. **Todd Dyer**, the pilot who flew the mission, tested the sniper pod’s abilities against stationary and moving targets. They worked with a team of joint terminal attack controllers from the 4th Air Support Operations Group at Heidelberg, Germany, in simulated conditions that resembled weather in Southwest Asia.

The controllers are Airmen who are integrated into Army units and provide air control in a combat zone.

Staff Sgt. **Raymond Herr**, a 4th ASOG controller, said he and his four-person team were excited to learn of the opportunity to work with the

innovative technology.

“It’s similar to when you graduate from a remote-controlled car that has a cord connecting the car and the controller,” Sergeant Herr said. “The sniper pod technology cuts that cord.”

The result of the satellite integration is more precision and speed, Captain Dyer said.

The flight also marked the first time an F-15E carried a GBU-38 Joint Direct Attack Munition, a 500-pound “smart” bomb designed for precision bombing in urban warfare.

“It’s a perfect combination,” Colonel Laughbaum said. “The precision of the sniper pod with the accuracy of the GBU-38 limits collateral damage and enhances the mission of our aircraft.”

*Senior Airman Lynne Neveu
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